

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

Sub A2

1. A method of establishing a connection between a personal computer system and a content delivery server, the personal computer system including a computing subsystem and a disk drive, the method comprising:

providing a network address for the content delivery server;

providing a server-contacting program;

storing the network address and the server-contacting program in the disk drive; and

installing firmware in the disk drive to initiate execution of the server-contacting program after the disk drive is connected to the computing subsystem in the personal computer system;

wherein execution of the server contacting program includes using the network address for connecting the personal computer system to the content delivery server.

2. The method of Claim 1, wherein:

the disk drive includes a protected area; and

the network address and the server-contacting program are stored in the protected area.

3. The method of Claim 1, wherein the firmware resides in a disk controller circuit.

4. The method of Claim 1, wherein the firmware automatically initiates execution of the server-contacting program when the disk drive is connected to the computing subsystem in the personal computer system.

5. The method of Claim 1, wherein the firmware delays initiating execution of the server-contacting program until a predetermined period has lapsed.

6. The method of Claim 1, wherein the firmware delays initiating execution of the server-contacting program until the firmware determines that a selected number of monitored events exceeds a threshold.

1 7. The method of Claim 6, wherein the monitored events includes the
2 number of boot-ups in the computing subsystem.

1 8. The method of Claim 1, wherein the personal computer system receives
2 content data from the content delivery server and subsequently displays the content
3 during a boot sequence.

1 9. The method of Claim 8, wherein the content of the displayed content
2 data is periodically changed.

1 10. The method of Claim 8, wherein the content data is selected from the
2 group comprising: a content display program, a game, an entertainment program, a
3 utility program, entertainment data, advertisement data, and music data.

09618765-071800

11. A computer network, comprising:
a content delivery server having a network address; and
a personal computer system comprising a computing subsystem and a
disk drive, wherein the disk drive comprises:

a network address;

a server-contacting program; and

a disk controller circuit for initiating execution of the server-
contacting program after the disk drive is connected to the computing
subsystem in the personal computer system, wherein execution of the
server-contacting program includes the using the network address for
connecting the personal computer system to the content delivery server.

12. The computer network of Claim 11, wherein the disk controller circuit
initiates the execution of the server-contacting program upon the occurrence of a
selected condition that is determined by the disk controller circuit.

13. The computer network of Claim 11, wherein:

the disk drive includes a protected area; and

the network address and the server-contacting program are stored in the
protected area.

14. The computer network of Claim 11, wherein the disk controller circuit
automatically initiates execution of the server-contacting program when the disk drive is
connected to the computing subsystem in the personal computer system.

15. The computer network of Claim 11, wherein the disk controller circuit
delays initiating execution of the server-contacting program until a predetermined
period has lapsed.

16. The computer network of Claim 11, wherein the disk controller circuit
delays initiating execution of the server-contacting program until the disk controller
circuit determines that a selected number of monitored events exceeds a threshold.

17. The computer network of Claim 16, wherein the monitored events
includes the number of boot-ups in the computing subsystem.

1 18. The computer network of Claim 11, wherein the personal computer
2 system receives content data from the content delivery server and subsequently displays
3 the content during a boot sequence.

1 19. The computer network of Claim 18, wherein the content of the displayed
2 content data is periodically changed.

1 20. The computer network of Claim 19, wherein the content data is selected
2 from the group comprising: a content display program, a game, an entertainment
3 program, a utility program, entertainment data, advertisement data, and music data.

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